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TWO VASES FROM SARDIS

[PLATE IV]

THE two vases which are represented on PLATE IV and Figure 2 are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. They were found in fragments in a tomb at Sardis which was one of the richest in pottery that has yet been discovered there. Each vase has its special points of interest, and each, as I shall try to show, throws some light on the broader problems raised by the mass of vases and fragments recovered by the American Society for the Exploration of Sardis.

I shall begin with the vase (PLATE IV) which presents the simpler problem, so far as classification is concerned—a well preserved cylix of the class commonly called Cyrenaic.¹ It is in all respects a typical example. The shape is the common one for the Cyrenaic drinking cup, with deep bowl and comparatively short stem. With the exception of the foot and a band on a level with the handles, it is covered with the characteristic white slip, over which the decoration is painted in black varnish of fairly good quality, with considerable use of purplish red as an overcolor. The scheme of the decoration, also, is a familiar one, with groups of fine and broad bands (the broad ones regularly with red overcolor) used to separate the more elaborate patterns, thin downward rays on the stem, two pomegranate patterns, a row of eggs, and a band of upward rays on the body of the bowl, an elaborate pomegranate net on the lip, and two large palmettes (incised and with red centres) placed on their sides about each handle. On the inside of the lip is an elaborate lotus and pomegranate pattern, and at the centre of the bowl is the usual medallion, surrounded by broad and narrow bands and a Z-pattern. In the medallion is painted a Sphinx, seated to right, with recurved wings and with a scroll rising from her head. Between her legs is a bird facing right, and in front of her is another bird facing

¹ The dimensions are: height, 12.3 cm.; diameter, 18.9 cm.



CYRENAIC CYLIX FROM SARDIS: NEW YORK.

left. Red overcolor is used on the hair and the backs of the wings of the Sphinx, and on the wings of the birds.

All these details can be closely paralleled in other examples of the Cyrenaic class.¹ The most unusual is the pattern on the inside of the lip, which is somewhat more elaborate than is common, but is plainly developed from the lotus bud and the pomegranate. The Sphinx is a frequent element in the decoration of this class of vases, especially for the central medallion of a cylix.² The closest parallel that I have found is in the cylix Louvre E 664 (= Dugas 34), of which the central medallion is here reproduced (Fig. 1) from *Arch. Zeit.* 1881, pl. XIII, No. 6.



FIGURE 1.—SPHINX FROM CYRENAIC CYLIX IN THE LOUVRE.

It is not my purpose here to enter into a detailed discussion of the controversy concerning the place of manufacture of the Cyrenaic group of vases. The theory that they were made at Cyrene, first suggested by Loeschke and Puchstein, was very generally accepted up to the time of the excavations of the British School on the site of the temple of Artemis Orthia at Sparta in 1906 and the following years.³ Those excava-

tions yielded many vases and fragments similar in technique and style to the Cyrenaic group already recognized, and—what is more important—the stratification of the site made it possible to distinguish earlier and later stages in the development of the ware.⁴ The

¹ For the decorative patterns on Cyrenaic vases, cf. *R. Arch.* IX, 1907, pp. 378–386.

² Compare in the useful catalogue of Cyrenaic vases compiled by Dugas (*R. Arch.* X, 1907, pp. 48–58), Nos. 24, 34, 39, 53, 59?, 85. All of these are cylices except No. 24. Cf. also *B.S.A.* XIII, p. 134, fig. 10 *c* (fragment from Sparta) and XIV, p. 38, fig. 5 (oenochoe from Sparta).

³ For the older literature on Cyrenaic vases, cf. *B.C.H.* XVII, 1893, p. 226, note 1; *R. Arch.* IX, 1907, p. 377, note 3. For more recent discussions, besides those already mentioned in the previous notes, reference may be made to Prinz, *Funde aus Naukratis*, pp. 64–67; *J.H.S.* XXVIII, 1908, pp. 175–179; *R. Arch.* XXI, 1913, pp. 418 f.

⁴ On the pottery found at Sparta, cf. Droop's reports in *B.S.A.* XIII, pp. 118–136; XIV, pp. 30–47; XV, pp. 23–39.

amount of this pottery is so great that it is obviously of local origin, and the excavators proposed the name "Laconian" for the whole class, and worked out a system of classification into six chronological groups (Laconian I, II, III, etc.),¹ which is entirely acceptable so far as the vases from Sparta are concerned. In regard to the "exported" vases, however, that is, vases found outside of Laconia, many, apparently, find an exclusive Laconian theory too narrow and feel that the arguments advanced for Cyrenaic origin for a part, at least, of the vases still have weight. These arguments are, in general, the amount of Cyrenaic ware found at Naucratis, for which Cyrene seems a more likely place of origin than Sparta; the subject and the details of the Arcesilas cylix,² which suggest an intimate knowledge of life at Cyrene hard to attribute to a Laconian painter; and the subject of a cylix in the British Museum which has been plausibly identified by Studniczka as the nymph Cyrene.³ To these may now be added the subject of a fragmentary cylix in the Museum of Tarentum, which seems to represent the nymph Cyrene struggling with the lion.⁴ The fragments of Cyrenaic vases discovered at Cyrene itself during the excavations conducted by the Archaeological Institute in 1910-11⁵ might also be cited in this connection, but these were so few that little weight can be given to their evidence. More extensive exploration of the site no doubt will some day bring more conclusive evidence. For the present we must, I think, conclude that Cyrenaic ware was certainly manufactured in Laconia, and probably also in Cyrene.

So far as the cylix from Sardis is concerned, the controversy as to the origin of the Cyrenaic vases is of secondary importance. In any case the vase before us is an imported vase of Greek manu-

¹ Cf. for a brief statement of the classification, *B.S.A.* XIV, pp. 46 f.; and for an attempt to apply it to the "exported" vases, *J.H.S.* XXX, 1910, pp. 1-34.

² In the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; cf. De Ridder, *Cat. des Vases Peints de la Bibl. Nat.* I, p. 98, No. 189. In Dugas's catalogue, No. 12.

³ British Museum B 4; cf. Walters, *Cat. of Greek and Roman Vases*, II, p. 50; Studniczka, *Kyrene*, pp. 17 ff. In Dugas's catalogue, No. 23.

⁴ Cf. Dugas, *R. Arch.* XX, 1912, pp. 96-98. In this article, which is devoted especially to a description of Cyrenaic vases in the Museum at Tarentum, Dugas has summarized very clearly (pp. 98-102) the arguments pro and con in the Laconia-Cyrene controversy. To his conclusion, that the answer to the question, "Cyrene or Sparta?" is really "Cyrene and Sparta," I heartily subscribe.

⁵ Cf. Hoppin in *Bull. Arch. Inst.* II, p. 165.

facture, which points to trade relations with the west, presumably through the medium of one of the Ionic cities. A more important question is the date to be assigned, inside the group, to this particular example. The elements to be considered in such an attempt at dating have been pointed out by Droop.¹ The most important are the amount and the quality of the white slip, which in early examples covers the whole vase and is thick and smooth, but later degenerates in quality and is gradually abandoned; the use of purple for parts of the decorative patterns, such as the crossbar of the lotus; the shape of the foot of the cylix, which at first has a sharp edge and later becomes thick and rounded; and the thickness of the rim, where "a greater thickness than .004 m. is likely, other things being equal, to indicate a date not earlier than the middle of Laconian IV" (550-500 B.C.). On the basis of these criteria, the cylix from Sardis must be placed in Laconian III (600-550) or Laconian IV (550-500), and on the whole the earlier period seems to me the more probable. The slip is of good quality and covers almost the whole vase; the foot has a notably sharp edge; and the thickness of the rim is not quite .003 m. Purple, to be sure, is not used for any part of the decorative patterns, but it is quite extensively used for the broad bands.

The dating 600-550 B.C. agrees well with the evidence of two other imported vases from the same tomb. One is an Attic vase of very early black-figured style, the other a Corinthian *olpe* of rather careless execution. The three vases together serve to date the comparatively large amount of native pottery found in the tomb and so give us a fixed point in the chronology of Sardinian vases.

The problem presented by the second vase (Fig. 2) is of a different sort. This is a pitcher of unusual shape, characterized by a broad, wide spout with a strainer at the base, formed by perforating the wall of the vase at this point with a series of comparatively large holes, irregularly distributed. The vase has a foot in the shape of a truncated cone, a broad, thick handle placed on one side, and a rather low, offset rim.² The outside is decorated in the technique which is conveniently called "marbling," *i.e.*, the application, over a white slip, of black to brown varnish in a manner which produces irregular waves or zigzags,

¹ *J.H.S.* XXX, 1910, pp. 2-5.

² The dimensions are: height, 13 cm.; height with handle, 16.3 cm.; diameter, 11.9 cm.; length of spout, 6.8 cm.

suggesting an imitation of work in glass. The inside is painted in what may be called "streaked technique," the application of a lustrous varnish in such a way that, although the surface is covered, the effect is streaked and uneven.

That this vase is a local product there can be little doubt. The high, conical foot is a favorite with the potters of Sardis,¹



FIGURE 2.—VASE FROM SARDIS: NEW YORK.

and marbling and the streaked technique are characteristic of large numbers of Sardian vases of the seventh and the sixth centuries, B.C.² But the shape is unusual, and a search for similar forms leads to interesting results. The fundamental idea of a spouted vase with a strainer is, of course, no novelty in the sixth century, for it can be traced back to early post-Mycenaean times at least. I have noted an unpainted specimen from Tiryns³ and

¹ Cf. *A.J.A.* XVIII, 1914, p. 433.

² *Ibid.* pp. 434 f.

³ Schliemann, *Tiryns*, p. 120, fig. 30.

a number of examples from Cyprus.¹ But none of these vases presents close similarities to the vase from Sardis. All are characterized by narrow necks, small mouths, and much narrower bodies than our vase. In fact, the closest analogies that I have so far been able to find are in a series of spouted vases discovered in 1900 by the brothers Körte at Gordium. In the tumulus numbered III by the excavators, which is dated about 700 B.C., no less than fifteen such vases were found.² They show slight



FIGURE 3.—VASE FROM GORDIUM.

variations in form; eight are painted in dull colors with geometric patterns; seven are unpainted; and two have a perforated top instead of an open mouth. But all exhibit the long spout with the sieve at its base (cf. Fig. 3, from *Gordion*, pl. III). The

¹ Cf. British Museum C 703, *Catalogue of Greek and Roman Vases* I, pt. II, p. 133, fig. 262, and *Excavations in Cyprus*, p. 75, fig. 134 (sub-Mycenaean); Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Cat. of the Cyprus Museum*, p. 69, No. 1092, and pl. IV. (Graeco-Phoenician white ware); Louvre A 97, Pottier, *Vases Ant. du Louvre*, I, p. 6, pl. 7; Dümmler, *Ath. Mitt.* XIII, 1888, p. 290, fig. 1.

² Cf. G. and A. Körte, *Gordion: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen im Jahre 1900*, pp. 55-59, 62-64, 83 f.

discoverers argue that these vessels were made for dipping from a larger vase and serving some liquid containing solid ingredients, and they suggest, very plausibly, that this was barley-beer, such as Xenophon found in use among the Armenians.¹ There can be no doubt that these vases from Gordium are the work of native Phrygian potters. The decoration is similar to that of other vases found on the site, and the shape appears to have developed from earlier Phrygian spouted vases, examples of which (one with a sieve) were found in the much earlier tumulus of Bos-öjök.²

The shape of the vase from Sardis, therefore, points definitely towards the east and suggests that in the pottery from this site we must expect to find influences from the east as well as from the west. Such influences are difficult to prove, because the development of the potter's art in central Asia Minor is still obscure, and so clear a case as that of the spouted vase is very helpful.

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¹ Xen. *Anab.* IV, 5, 26 f.

² Cf. *Ath. Mitt.* XXIV, 1899, p. 33, with pl. III, Nos. 16 and 25.